

socialization of their children in an attempt to advantage their children's acquisition of these secondary Discourses, whether they be school-based, community-based, or religion-based Discourses, for instance. For example, many middle-class homes use school-based language and practices with their small children at home long before they go to school, as we saw in Chapter 8 above, to advantage their children for school. Many African-Americans incorporate church-based language and practices into their early home-based interactions with their children, as, indeed, did my own family.

People also, later in life, strategically use aspects of their primary Discourses or community-based secondary Discourses in "pulling off" performances in some of their other secondary Discourses. For example, consider the ways in which Jesse Jackson combined a distinctive African-American church-based secondary Discourse with a mainstream political Discourse. Such a move is risky. If people had rejected Jackson as a national politician because they saw the African-American bits (e.g., his rhetorical devices) as "unacceptable" in mainstream political Discourse ("being/doing a national politician"), then he would have failed to get recognized as such. But the time and place was (eventually) right and lots of people—even political enemies—did recognize him as a national politician. Since his risk worked, he actually changed the political Discourse, allowing new types of performances to work. In turn, others followed him (to the point where even white Republican politicians use some of the same—admittedly attenuated—sorts of rhetorical devices in their speeches). This is one important way in which Discourses change—people mix them and their mixtures get recognized and accepted (but, of course, not always or even usually).

How do people come by the Discourses they are members of? Here it is necessary, before answering the question, to make an important distinction, a distinction that does not exist in non-technical parlance: a distinction between acquisition and learning (Krashen 1985a, b). This distinction is, like the one above between primary and secondary Discourses, not meant to be taken as airtight and unproblematic. What it really involves is a continuum whose two poles are "acquisition" and "learning," with mixed cases in between. (For a much more nuanced and detailed discussion about learning, see Gee 2003, 2004.)

We will distinguish acquisition and learning as follows:

Acquisition is a process of acquiring something (usually, subconsciously) by exposure to models, a process of trial and error, and practice within social groups, without formal teaching. It happens in

specific people with their specific feelings. This battle of "kinds" are actually many "kinds" of great perplexities in human life and perspective is just this: no one, they have lost these Discourse as Minnis discusses, given the in which Discourses connected a certain "kinds of people."

### Acquisition and learning

We can distinguish two broad sorts of Discourses in any society: The first sort is what I called "primary Discourses" above. The second sort I called "secondary Discourses." Primary Discourses are those to which people are apprenticed early in life during their primary socialization as members of particular families within their sociocultural settings. Primary Discourses constitute our first social identity, and something of a base within which we acquire or resist later Discourses. They form our initial taken-for-granted understandings of who we are and who people "like us" are, as well as what sorts of things we ("people like us") do, value, and believe when we are not "in public." Lots can happen to them as we go through life, and by the time we are no longer children our primary Discourse has transmuted into our lifeworld Discourse, our culturally distinctive way of being an "everyday" person, not a specialist of some sort.

Secondary Discourses are those to which people are apprenticed as part of their socializations within various local, state, and national groups and institutions outside early home and peer-group socialization—for example, churches, gangs, schools, offices. They constitute the recognizable and meaningfulness of our "public" (more formal) acts. A particular woman, for instance, might be recognized as a businesswoman, political activist, feminist, church member, National Organization of Women official, PTA member, and volunteer Planned Parenthood counselor, and many more, by carrying out performances that are recognizable within and by these Discourses.

This distinction between primary Discourses and secondary Discourses is not meant to be airtight and unproblematic. In fact, I draw the distinction precisely because the boundary between the two sorts of Discourses is constantly negotiated and contested in society and history. Many social groups borrow aspects of valued secondary Discourses into the

Gee, J.P. (2008) *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in discourses* (3rd ed.)  
London: Routledge.

Read to end of §1 on p. 169  
Read pgs. 168-169